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CRUDE WORRY AS OPEC+ TO REVISIT PRODUCTION HIKE

A month after the cartel agreed to ramp up supply, Kuwait's oil minister on Sunday said the decision could be revisited

CRUCIAL CARTEL MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 1

Kuwait prefaced its observation on some markets being engulfed in the 4th wave of the pandemic, Reuters reported. OPEC+ had agreed to raise supply by 4,00,000 barrels per day after shuttering 45% production last year. The grouping meets on September 1 to take a call, but since Brent prices jumped back to $72.75 on Sunday, another acrimonious session is likely

BAD NEWS FOR INDIA IF RATES SPIRAL

- The International Energy Agency had slashed demand outlook for 2021 after Brent price slumped to below $64 in August first half, and warned of a surplus in 2022. But prices rallied after that
- Rise in rates, coupled with a supply cut, slims hopes for a fuel rate cut and may not let inflation cool down in countries like India

23

NATIONS, INCLUDING RUSSIA, ARE MEMBERS OF THE OPEC+ GROUPING

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The Metro train winds through Mysuru Road on its maiden journey after departing from the Kengeri Bus Terminal Metro station, in Bengaluru on Sunday | VINOD KUMAR T

CM revises Metro Ph-II deadline to 2024, a year ahead of schedule

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CHIEF Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Sunday announced that Bengaluru Metro's 72.1 km Phase-II project will be ready by 2024, a year before the earlier proposed deadline. With Metro projects already on a tight schedule due to Covid-induced delays, the announcement came as a surprise.

This is in sharp contrast to previous Metro events since the norm during the commissioning of every new stretch was to announce an extension of the deadline for ongoing projects.

The Chief Minister made the announcement at a function at the Kengeri Bus Terminal Metro station after taking the first Metro ride from Nayandahalli Metro station, in the company of Union Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and state ministers. "I have told Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) officials to complete all Phase-2 projects by 2024. Officials told me it is difficult, but I told them that they have to struggle if they have to overcome the difficulties," he said.

Translating it from Kannada to English for Puri, he said, "I am confident it can be done by 2024."

CONTINUED ON: P2

US drone takes out IS car bomb to save airport

Elusive Taliban supreme leader in Kandahar, to appear in public soon, says spokesperson

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

IN its second airstrike in successive days on Sunday to safeguard the evacuation process in Kabul, a US drone took out an ISIS-K car bomb that was being readied to attack the airport. There were also reports of multiple suicide bombers on board when the car was taken out. Big secondary explosions after the drone strike indicated the vehicle was loaded with explosives, US officials said.

The attack came on day when a militia rocket struck a building at Kabul's Khuwja Bughra, around 1 km from the airport, killing a child. No group claimed the attack, but the White House said similar attacks were likely in Kabul in the next 24-36 hours.

Regarding the IS suicide attack that killed over 180 people outside the Kabul airport on Thursday last, intelligence reports in Western media suggested that Al-Qaeda's Khalil Haqqani had facilitated it.

Elusive Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada, who was thought to be in Pakistan army's custody, arrived in Kandahar, spokesman Bilal Karimi said. "I can confirm he is in Kandahar. He will soon appear in public," Karimi said.

France's President Emmanuel Macron said Paris and London on Monday planned to jointly propose at the UN the creation of a 'safe zone' in Kabul that would allow for 'humanitarian operations'.

As for the Kabul airport, a Taliban official said they had engineers and technicians ready to take charge of it. "We are waiting for the final nod from the Americans to secure full control over Kabul airport as both sides aim for a swift handover," he said.

Banks opened for the first time under the new Taliban rule, but with a cap on daily withdrawals. While some complained of still being unable to access their money, government employees claimed they have not been paid over the last four months. Reports of continuing Taliban brutality came in, the latest being the gunning down of a folk singer north of Kabul. Fawad Andarabi was shot dead from point-blank range in the Andarabi Valley in Baghlan province.

In what was seen as Taliban's outreach, its leader Sher Mohd Abbas Stanekzai said they wanted to retain economic and political ties with India. In a video address, Stanekzai referred to the air corridor between India and Afghanistan established to boost trade after Pakistan's refusal to allow transit access. "We need to keep the air trade open," he said. P12

Afghans photographing a car bomb that was destroyed by a US drone on Sunday | AP

Journos, sportsmen among blast dead

Among those killed in Thursday's attack were two journalists, Ali Reza Ahmadi and Najma Sadeqi. Two Afghan national-level athletes, Mohammad Jan Sultani (taekwondo) and Idrees (wushu), too, were killed in the blast, said Chinese media outlet Xinhua

The Joe Biden administration is committed to safe passage to Americans and the Afghans who helped the US government after the withdrawal deadline from Afghanistan

Jake Sullivan, NSA of the US

EXPRESS READ

Puttur temple bans parking for non-Hindus

MANGALURU: The Puttur Mahalingeshwara temple, which is under the Muzrai department, has invited criticism after it allegedly prohibited non-Hindus from using a paddy field on the premises to park their vehicles. Meanwhile, Dakshina Kannada Deputy Commissioner Dr Rajendra KV told TNIE that he will look into the issue. P5

NATIONWIDE	AUG 28	AUG 29
Fresh cases	46,759	45,083
Recoveries	31,374	35,840
Deaths	509	460

KARNATAKA	AUG 28	AUG 29
Fresh cases	1,229	1,262
Recoveries	1,289	1,384
Deaths	13	17

WITH THIS ISSUE
THE ESSENTIAL CAMPUS DIGEST edex
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Modi to expedite administrative reforms promised two years ago?

MANISH ANAND @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi is learnt to have told his ministerial colleagues to expedite implementation of the party's 2019 vision document for the Lok Sabha elections. He also asked the newly inducted ministers to closely study the BJP's 2014 and 2019 manifestos and prioritise steps for their faster implementation from their respective ministries.

In two meetings of the council of ministers held soon after the Cabinet rejig, Modi's instructions were to focus on deliverables in the 2019 vision document, which was drawn up incorporating crowd-sourced ideas.

Within the BJP, party leaders are particularly looking at three big areas that are yet to be addressed: administrative, police and judicial reforms. There's anticipation within the party that Modi may soon embark on the promised administrative reforms. The 2019 vision document spoke of reforms in the civil services to meet the objective of minimum government, besides merging similar and complementary departments into sectoral ministries. The document had also promised police reforms by framing a model Police Act in consultation with states.

Modi's urgency appears to be directed at addressing political challenges in the aftermath of the second Covid wave. While the BJP can claim to have ticked the nationalism checkboxes in the document like taking out Articles 370 and 35A as also the CAA, there are loads of unfulfilled assurances, like building consensus for simultaneous polls, single voter list across polls, doubling farmers' income by 2023, completing dedicated railway freight corridor projects by 2022, among others.

Higher edu institutions

The vision document promised to enhance capacities of higher education professional institutions by 50%, apparently to facilitate the implementation of the 10% EWS quota

We've studied the vision document. Steps are being listed for their implementation in an orderly manner

New Union minister

PARALYMPICS

Mother's push behind Nishad's jump

FIROZ MIRZA @ Chennai

MOTHER Pushpa Devi looked in horror as her eight-year-old son Nishad Kumar's right hand got dismembered by a grass-cutting machine in their farm almost 13 years ago in Amb town of Una district, Himachal Pradesh. Being a former national-level volleyball player herself, her dream was to see her son take up sports at the highest-level, before it came crashing down many moons ago. Devi still remembers how her son was lying unconscious in a pool of blood with his limb cut off from the elbow.

While it did cut short Devi's dreams for the time being, it seldom stopped her from ensuring Nishad played some sport or the other. That faith and determination eventually yielded a high jump silver medal in the T47 category for India at the Tokyo Paralympics on Sunday, August 29, incidentally celebrated as National Sports Day. The 21-year-old cleared 2.06 m setting an Asian record to finish joint-second with American Dallas Wise. USA's Roderick Townsend clinched the gold with a world record jump of 2.15 m.

Nishad Kumar won silver with a clearance of 2.06m at the Paralympics Sunday | PTI

"My mother was alone on the field that fateful day. She, however, didn't lose heart. In fact, she was so determined to make him a sportsperson that my brother started competing barely a year after that accident," Rama Devi, Nishad's sister, told this daily.

Nishad even competed against able-bodied athletes in the 2017 School Nationals. In the same year, he shifted to Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Panchkula, Chandigarh to hone his skills. He won bronze in the 2019 World Para Athletics Championships in Dubai with a jump of 2 m to secure a Paralympic quota.

"He was confident of winning a medal. Even in the morning when I spoke to him, I was nervous but he assured me not to worry," informed the sister.

Nishad twice returned Covid-19 positive earlier this year but continued improving his show by setting his personal best on two occasions, the second one of 2.07 m came at the trials. P15

TOKYO 2020 PARALYMPIC GAMES

Two more medals

India celebrated the National Sports Day with two more medals at Paralympics. Bhavinaben Patel settled for silver after losing the table tennis final and discus thrower Vinod Kumar bagged bronze in the men's F52 event

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